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23 November 1973

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Near-Term Planning for Middle East Photo
Reconnaissance [redacted]

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1. Eight copies of this memorandum were delivered to [redacted], NIO for the Middle East, on 21 November. He indicated that he had drafted a note of transmittal for the DCI's signature which would send this document to Dr. Kissinger with copies to the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman, JCS. Sam planned to review this with the Director on the 21st.

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2. An exact copy, double-spaced, was delivered to [redacted], DIA, for [redacted] and Admiral dePoix. It was [redacted] intention to review this with Admiral dePoix upon his return from the NRP EXCOM meeting in order to seek earliest review and discussion with the Chairman, JCS. I indicated that the version given DIA was in draft only because Mr. Colby had not yet reviewed and approved it.

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3. The final version of this document was reviewed in detail with DIA [redacted] dePoix) and with Ed Proctor and [redacted]. Nearly final drafts were reviewed and coordinated with D/OSR, D/NPIC, Middle East Task Force, and various suggestions and changes were incorporated in successive drafts.

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4. A copy of the draft was LDX'd to Lawson Moyer, Department of State, for information and comment, but not in time for coordination or action within the Department. DIA was asked to advise Air Force intelligence personnel of the actions being taken on this paper.

JCS, DIA and NRO review(s) completed.

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5. Initial dissemination of the memorandum is as follows: eight copies to [redacted], NIO for the Middle East; one copy each to DDI, DDS&T, D/OSR, Chief of Middle East Task Force [redacted], D/NPIC, D/IAS, Chairman of ICRS, CIA Member of COMIREX, Chairman of EXSUBCOM, DIA Member of COMIREX, OSR [redacted], and NPIC [redacted]. On 23 November, copies were also made available to the State, Army, Navy, and Air Force Members of COMIREX as well as to the NSA and NRO Consultants. Formal distribution through COMIREX channels will be effected following action on the memorandum by the DCI.

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[redacted]

[Redacted]

21 November 1973

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT : Near-Term Planning for Middle East Photo Reconnaissance

1. This memorandum reviews the needs for photographic reconnaissance of the Middle East over the next month or two, and the capabilities of satellite and airborne systems to meet such needs. A plan for the coordinated use of these reconnaissance assets is recommended in paragraph 12.

Background

2. Photo reconnaissance of the Middle East since 6 October has been provided by four SR-71 (GIANT REACH) missions which covered extensive areas and targets throughout the region on each mission, [Redacted] coverage. The SR-71 flights have been staged from the U.S. and have been individually planned and executed on the basis of specific needs

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[Redacted]

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a. The overall SR-71 results have been good considering all factors. However, the one-at-a-time planning, review, and policy approval procedure is poorly suited for effective longer term reconnaissance.

WARNING NOTICE
SENSITIVE INTELLIGENCE SOURCES
AND METHODS INVOLVED

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SCHEDULE OF E.O. 11652, EXEMPTION CATEGORY:
§ 5B(1), (2), (3) or (4) (circle one or more)
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(unless impossible, insert date or event)

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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b. Satellite reconnaissance has been effective in providing important information both in the Middle East and support areas in the USSR, but some information has not been timely because of the elapsed time between imagery operations and recovery, processing, and review of the film.

3. The SR-71 has the capability of covering most, but not all, primary objectives in the Middle East on a single mission with rapid availability of derived information but represents a complex undertaking which has inherent risks and some political drawbacks. Satellite reconnaissance is unobtrusive but cannot photograph all objectives of interest on the same day or return the film for immediate review and reporting. The overall situation calls for the use of both collection systems, coordinated in such a way as to take advantage of their inherent strengths while minimizing their limitations.

Intelligence Need

4. Intelligence community elements have identified the following substantive problems as requiring regularly updated photography over the next month or two, assuming a continuation of a cease-fire and the relationship of the forces as at present:

a. Soviet Presence in the Middle East either in terms of the introduction of combat or support troops, or in the logistical resupply and training of Arab forces.

b. Monitoring Cease-Fire or Other Lines of Demarcation including the status and disposition of opposing combat and support forces along and in the rear of these lines.

c. Potential Build-up Areas and Logistical Support Bases to detect buildups or preparations for renewal of hostilities or other activities contrary to the spirit or letter of understandings or agreements.

[Redacted]

d. Weapons Delivery and Deployment
with emphasis on the detection of new or advanced
weapons which would affect the military balance in
the region.

5. The relevant geographic areas and targets for photo
coverage in relation to these needs are shown on maps in the attachment.

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6. In general, good quality photographic coverage of the
majority of the identified objectives [Redacted] should be sufficient
to provide photo information bearing on these substantive problems.
Although reconnaissance [Redacted] can provide data on the
location of military units and general readiness of forces, it will not
necessarily be able to provide timely intelligence of small-scale actions
or tactical warning of hostilities.

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Reconnaissance Assets

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7. The SR-71 (GIANT REACH) aircraft [Redacted]
[Redacted] are the primary photographic reconnaissance assets
available for employment against the Middle East intelligence objectives
at the present time. If a permissive reconnaissance environment existed,
U-2R aircraft would also constitute an effective collection capability, but
we have not included it in the present plan.

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[Redacted]

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9. To have current photography regularly it will be necessary
to supplement satellite reconnaissance with SR-71 missions. In turn, if
SR-71 aircraft are to be employed on a regular basis, there are operational,
cost and contingency advantages in operating from a forward base [Redacted]
[Redacted] One of the most limiting and costly aspects to

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these flights, when staged from the U.S., is the necessary re-fueling and tanker deployment and support required. Forward bases adequate for sustaining SR-71 operations include: [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

The DoD is reviewing these options.

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10. [Redacted]

[Redacted] SR-71 missions, on the other hand, can be planned directly against specific objectives. Close coordination will be effected on the collection objectives assigned to the two systems.

Vulnerability-Risk Factors

11. The SR-71 mission survivability has been evaluated extensively by the DoD with the conclusion that its present defensive systems and operational characteristics should insure survivability against all known threats in the Middle East. The survivability analyses have been recently re-examined and reaffirmed. It must be recognized, however, that there is always some risk of operational failure and both the international and U.S. domestic implications of a reconnaissance loss in the Middle East should be recognized and weighed in connection with the reconnaissance plan outlined below.

Recommended Reconnaissance Plan

12. It is recommended that the concepts and projections below be approved as the near-term photographic reconnaissance plan for the Middle East:

a. SR-71 missions at about weekly intervals should be planned to provide a regular update of information on the problems which have been identified.

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[Redacted]

The specific collection objectives to be assigned to each SR-71 mission and the

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political climate at the time will be reviewed on an interagency basis prior to execution. The following specific plan is recommended:

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[Redacted]

- Nov 25-27 : SR-71 Mission--exact timing dependent on operational factors
- Dec 3-5 : SR-71 Mission--exact timing dependent on operational factors
- Dec 11-13 : SR-71 Mission--exact timing dependent on operational factors

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[Redacted]

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A continued need for SR-71 missions [Redacted] is projected through January 1974.

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b. Concurrently, contingency plans should be prepared for SR-71 operations [Redacted] in the event of renewed hostilities or radically changed circumstances. These would be implemented only upon specific direction of the WSAG.

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c. In support of these activities, DoD is reviewing the operational factors and forward base trade-offs of SR-71 missions at the projected rates and the Department of State is investigating approaches to necessary negotiations. It is important that these actions proceed promptly to allow early implementation as appropriate.

Attachments

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

ATTACHMENTS:

Map : The Egyptian Front

Map : The Syrian Front

Table :

[Redacted]

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Map :

[Redacted]

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20 November 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: SEA BUFFALO HUNTER Mission Rate Reduction

Following actions were taken in response to [redacted] request for coordination on DoD proposal to reduce monthly BUFFALO HUNTER mission rate in SEA from 25 to 20 in order to reduce fuel expenditures:

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a. [redacted] was asked to provide CIA views. Response was provided to [redacted] at ME/NIO session this afternoon to the effect that the lower rate was acceptable but that close requirements coordination should be effected in future mission planning to insure maximum returns from the reduced number of missions.

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b. [redacted] (for NIO/SEA) was informed of proposal and indicated he foresaw no difficulties.

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c. [redacted] (NIO/SEA) was contacted Wednesday morning (21 Nov) and indicated he concurred in the CIA response, particularly emphasizing the importance of their latter point--maximizing the substantive effectiveness of each future mission.

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